Introduction

121 The following collection of myths, stories and chants was made during a visit to Pukapuka (Danger Island) in 1934-35. Conditions under which the material was gathered have been already described [see 1: Beaglehole and Beaglehole, pp. 3-4, category 116--analyst.]

128 With the exception of several of the stories, all the myths, tales and chants were collected in text and translated in the field with the help of competent informants. Text and translation are given for two stories in order to indicate something of the flavor of the Pukapukan literary style and the characteristic methods of story telling [Texts and translations for 3 other stories have been also given--analyst.] The remainder of the myths and stories are presented in a summarised form only, full texts and translations being filed in the Library of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum. A few only of the many chants collected are given here, the remainder also being filed in the Bernice P. Bishop Museum.

Story Telling

538 Story telling in Pukapuka is largely incidental to the com-
533 posing and reciting of chants. Yet the chants draw on the stories for incidents, references, and allusions in very large measure. A chant may serve as a sort of shorthand commentary on a well known story; unless the story is known and kept in mind, the chant itself, obscure at best, is practically unintelligible. This will be clear from the chants recorded. Though proverbs are unknown, sententious evaluation of persons or events is by stereotyped reference to characters or incidents in stories and legends.

[537] Oratory as a formal art is undeveloped. The technique of
[195] story telling does not differ from that of ordinary conversation.
538 In both there is intense dramatization of the subject matter by gesture and vocal expression. When they told the Maui story, for example, informants acted it out as if they were reliving the incidents: Maui's pulling in a fish involved vigorous movement of hand and body until every fathom of fish line was hauled in from the depths of the ocean. All noises are reproduced by the narrator with great fidelity and emphasis, whether the sound "Bup!" indicating the paddling of a canoe or the harsh ejaculation "Pa! " expressing contempt or anger. When the story was completed, informants seemed both emotionally and physically exhausted and a long breathing spell was required before another story could be started. More intense dramatization I have never seen in story telling anywhere.